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## Montgomery Named Kemp Teaching Award Winner

April 10, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University Associate Professor of Political Science Kathleen Montgomery was named the 2015 recipient of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence at the annual Honors Convocation on Wednesday. The award recipient is nominated by the faculty and selected by the faculty Promotion and Tenure Committee.

In announcing Montgomery as the recipient, Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green quoted one of her nominators in noting Montgomery's contributions "are not only in her area of expertise, she also effectively contributes to general education by regularly delivering some of the most exciting Gateway Colloquium on our campus."

Montgomery teaches courses in comparative politics with an emphasis on post-communist Europe, advanced democracies, comparative method, and women and politics. She has conducted research in Europe with the assistance of Fulbright, IREX, and IWU Artistic and Scholarly Development grants. She has published on women in post-communist systems, Hungarian politics, post-communist party and legislative development, and regime transition. Her publication, *Women's Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe* (Oxford University Press), co-edited with Richard Matland, is widely cited in the academic literature and used in graduate courses at the Central European University in Budapest. Her work with Gabriella Ilonszki (Corvinus University, Budapest) is cited on the official website of the Hungarian parliament. Montgomery's current research interests focus on populist radical right-wing parties in Europe. She is a frequent reviewer for the academic journals *Women, Politics, and Public Policy*, *British Journal of Politics*, and *Comparative Political Studies*.



*Kathleen Montgomery*

Twice named Student Senate Professor of the Year, Montgomery joined the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan in 1996 after earning a Ph.D. at Emory University. She holds a B.A. in political science from Santa Clara University.

In addition to the announcement of the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, the Convocation recognizes numerous student scholastic honors and other faculty honorees. Two retiring faculty members — Professor of Music Steven Eggleston and R. Forrest Colwell Professor of American Literature Robert Bray — were awarded with professor emeritus status for their long and distinguished careers.

The 2014 Kemp Teaching award winner, Associate Professor of Chemistry Rebecca Roesner, was the featured speaker for the Convocation. René Shaffer attended the ceremony representing the Kemp family, whose family foundation provides funding for the award and has a long history of supporting Illinois Wesleyan.

In Roesner's presentation, entitled "The Art and Science of Living in the Present," she acknowledged the Honors Convocation as one of many milestones where student achievements and extraordinary work are celebrated, but cautioned the audience to "to explore and enjoy and reflect along the way, so that we don't hold our happiness hostage to the milestones."

She used three stories from the history of science as examples of people "who set aside their worries and distractions and took special notice of the present."

In her first example, Roesner recounted the story of bacteriologist Alexander Fleming, who noticed that mold had developed accidentally on a Petri dish being used to grow the staphylococci germ. The mold had created a bacteria-free circle around itself. Fleming experimented further and named the active substance penicillin.

In her second illustration, Roesner discussed chemist Roy Plunkett who was working at DuPont on the development of chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants in 1938. One of the reagents Plunkett used was tetrafluoroethylene, which was packaged in small metal cylinders similar to the ones used today by people who need portable oxygen.

One day the valve on one of Plunkett's containers was stuck and nothing came out, yet he knew from the mass of the container the chemical was still present. "A lot of people would have tossed the cylinder out or sent it back," Roesner explained. "In what would now be regarded as a horrendous safety violation, he sawed the cylinder in half and found a white powder."

The tetrafluoroethylene had polymerized into polytetrafluoroethylene. The substance is perhaps best known under the brand name of "Teflon."

In her final example, Roesner cited the story of Gordon "Mouse" Cleaver, a British RAF fighter pilot. During a 1940 mission, the Plexiglass canopy of Cleaver's plane was hit by enemy fire, shattering fragments into his face and both eyes. Cleaver had forgotten his flight goggles, Roesner said, but the pilot's misfortune soon resulted in a pioneering observation by ophthalmologist Harold Ridley.

The doctor and one of his students, Steve Parry, noticed that when splinters of the acrylic plastic lodged in the eyes of wounded pilots, they did not trigger rejection, Roesner said. This observation led Ridley to use artificial lenses in the eye to correct cases of cataracts.

"My hope is that these successes will give us a little encouragement to focus on the journey rather than the milestones, and to prepare our minds for serendipitous moments," she said.

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